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## **Residential leaseholders get updated guidance on the leasehold system**

It is estimated that there are over 1.8 million private leasehold flats in England and Wales. Unfortunately though, many lessees do not understand the system they have bought into nor are they fully aware of their rights and responsibilities. To help lessees better understand the leasehold system and how it works, the Association of Residential Managing Agents (ARMA) and the Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE) have just updated and re-launched one of their key guidance booklets, *Living in Leasehold Flats*.

The residential leasehold sector can be a complex one to live in. It is a unique system that is constantly affected by legislation (both directly and indirectly) and the intricate, sometimes conflicting, owner/occupier relationships between the landlord, their managing agent and the lessee. It is also a system that is so often plagued by misunderstandings frequently because the lessee has not been given adequate information from their solicitor before buying. The joint guidance booklet *Living in Leasehold Flats* (which was first published in 2003) gives a general overview of the sector and endeavors to enhance the reader's comprehension of the legal framework in which it operates, the financial aspects as well as some of the more practical details of leasehold.

Commenting on the re-launch of this important booklet ARMA's chairman, Peter Dening, of Pennycuik Collins in Birmingham, said "After the coalition's shock announcement last year that they do not plan to regulate the residential leasehold management sector nor introduce important accounting regulations to safe-guard lessees' money, it is more crucial now than ever that lessees are fully aware of all their rights and the protection that is available to them – quite often this can be more than they think. It was with this in mind that we took steps to update and improve this vital publication which we hope will help lessees to further understand the unique system they live in."

As well as providing an overview of the leasehold system, the *Living in Leasehold Flats* guide explains the wide range of rights that are available to leaseholders:-

- Access to information
- Consultation on major works and long-terms agreements
- Challenging service and administration charges
- Right to Manage
- Lease extensions
- Buying the freehold

- Right of first refusal
- Right to vary a lease

Although the framework can be complex, living in a leasehold flat need not be any more complicated or less enjoyable than living in a freehold house. A little bit of knowledge can go a long way and it is anticipated that the joint publication from ARMA and LEASE will help shed plenty of light on the lessees' rights and obligations.

*Living in Leasehold Flats* along with many other useful guidance publications for lessees can be downloaded freely from [www.arma.org.uk](http://www.arma.org.uk).

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editor:**

1. Formed in 1991, ARMA is the only body in England and Wales to focus exclusively on matters relating to the management of long leasehold residential property. The association has over 250 firms in membership that between them manage in excess of 850,000 units in more than 34,000 blocks of flats or estates (at least 60% of which are lessee-controlled properties). ARMA's founding principal aims are to represent its members and the interests of lessees, resident management companies and investor freeholders.
2. More information on ARMA can be found at [www.arma.org.uk](http://www.arma.org.uk)
3. Press release in Word format available on request

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